

Father Mathew

HIS LIFE AND WORK

BY
SUSAN GAVAN DUFFY



Dublin
Catholic Truth Society of Ireland
Offices—21 Upper O'Connell Street

HV
5032
M3
D84
1900

Some of the PENNY PUBLICATIONS

OF THE

Catholic Truth Society of Ireland.

HISTORICAL SERIES.

- The Round Towers and the Holy Wells of Ireland (with Illustrations).
By Most Rev. Dr. Healy, Archbishop of Tuam.
- The Four Masters. By the same.
- Some Irish Graves in Rome. By the same.
- Tara, Pagan and Christian. By the same.
- St. Patrick in the Far West. By the same.
- Two Royal Abbeys on the Western Lakes. By the same.
- Aileach of the Kings. By Most Rev. J. K. O'Doherty, Bishop of Derry.
- The Convention of Drom Ceat. Parts I. and II. By the same.
- The "Santa Croce of Ireland," or Holy Cross Abbey (with Illustrations).
By John B. Cullen.
- The Shannon and its Shrines (with Illustrations). Parts I., II., III.,
and IV. By the same.
- The Hill of Slane and its Memories; and the Castle of Trim (with
Illustrations). By the same.
- An Irish Shrine of the Madonna; and Bective Abbey (with Illustrations).
By the same.
- Lough Derg, Ireland's National Pilgrimage (with Illustrations). By
Rev. J. E. M'Kenna, P.P.
- Lough Erne and its Shrines (with Illustrations). Parts I., II., and III.
By the same.
- Fermanagh and its Princes. By the same.
- The Irish Brigade. By Sir Joseph A. Glynn.
- Saints and Irish Sanctuaries of Meath (with Illustrations). By William
Fallon, B.A.
- The Papal Nuncio among the Irish Confederates (1645-1649) (with
Portrait). Parts I. and II. Translated from the German of Rev.
Dr. Bellesheim by Rev. W. M'Loughlin.
- Catholic Ireland; or, How Ireland became Catholic, and How Ireland
has remained Catholic. By Rev. P. J. Kirwan.
- The Hills of Holy Ireland. By Ardrigh.
- The Ancient Franciscan Friary of Bun-na-Margie. By the same.
- The Monastery of Mungret (with Illustrations). By Rev. E. Cahill, S.J.
- Two Irish Parliaments: A Contrast. By Very Rev. Canon Murphy,
D.D., P.P.
- Glendaloch: its Story and its Ruins (with Illustrations). By Sir John
R. O'Connell, M.A., LL.D.
- Craobh Ruadh; or the Red Branch Knights. Parts I. and II. By M.
J. O'Mullane, M.A.
- The Tuatha de Danaan; or, the Children of Dana. Parts I. and II. By
the same.
- The Coming of the Children of Miledh. By the same.
- Cluain Maccu Nois (Clonmacnois) (with Illustrations). By R. A.
Macalister.
- The Development of the Catholic Church in Ireland and the Religious
Struggle during the Nineteenth Century. By Sir Henry Bellingham,
Bart., H.M.L.
- Killarney and its Memories. The Story of its Sanctuaries and its Castles
(with Illustrations). By J. B. O'Riordan.



Father Theobald Mathew.

HIS LIFE AND WORK.

BY SUSAN GAVAN DUFFY.

WHAT an earnest, heaven-inspired man, absolutely devoid of selfish aims, and devoted with entire singleness of purpose to a beneficent mission for the welfare of his fellows, can do for them, has seldom been more strikingly exemplified than in the life of Father Mathew, the great Apostle of Temperance, whose labours in the cause he so faithfully advocated for twenty years were crowned with such splendid success. Warriors who have driven out a relentless foe, heroes of charity whose ministrations have stayed the ravages of a plague, patriots who have set an enslaved nation free, merit the gratitude and homage of the people whom they have served ; and the work wrought in Ireland half a century ago by Theobald Mathew was a combination of all these services. For though even he, valiant and victorious as he was, could not completely destroy intemperance, the devastating enemy of his era and race, he drove it from the land for a time, permanently maimed and crippled it, and liberated from its fatal clutches thousands upon thousands of unhappy captives, who without his aid must have miserably perished.

Father Mathew was forty-seven years of age when he took up the work which was to be blessed with such fruitful results. He was a gentleman by birth and education, and from various portraits, as well as from the recollections of those who knew and loved him, and from written descriptions of his appearance

by such outside and unprejudiced witnesses as Mrs. S. C. Hall, who notes his mild and gracious countenance; Thackeray, who speaks of him as "a handsome, honest-looking man"; Carlyle, who declares "the very face of him attracts you"; and the Duke of Devonshire, who calls his countenance "divine," and his manner "marvellously winning," it is to be gathered that nature had generously done her part in furnishing due equipment for a man destined to exercise such magnetic power over all sorts and conditions of men. For though his work lay mainly among his own people, and naturally among the poorest and most ignorant of them, he had followers of various nationalities and of every rank; his singularly winning charin of manner and affectionate persuasiveness being as irresistible when put forth against cultured men and women of alien race as it was when he employed it, as he commonly did, to half coax, half coerce, his more emotional fellow-countrymen into better ways.

Theobald was the fourth boy in a band of nine brothers—all handsome, promising lads. He was from an early age the dearest and the best, and the one their mother hoped would become a priest—for, in a pious family such as the Mathews, that one son from out of such a goodly number should be given specially to the service of God was almost a foregone conclusion in Catholic Ireland. Something in the boy's character added to this predestination of the priesthood, and the fact that among all her children this one was his mother's darling, gave him a position among his brothers and sisters to which his place in the family scarcely entitled him.

In his boyhood, and indeed to the end of his days, there was nothing he liked better than to preside at a feast, and Hospitality was scarcely less dear to him as a virtue than her less convivial sister—Temperance. It was said of him later that when his bounties to the poor, whose claims he so generously admitted, left him any money to spend on himself, what he preferred to do with it was to give a dinner to his friends. But, as he held and habitually practised the charitable doctrine that "It is better to be deceived by nineteen impostors than to allow one deserving man to depart unrelieved," it may well be believed that his dinner parties were neither frequent nor luxurious. This deep-seated love for and comprehension of the poor dated back to his earliest childhood, when he used to listen with wide-eyed wonder to the stories of the beggars who flocked to the hospitable kitchen

of Thomastown, sure of having their wants attended to. Mr. Denny Lane, speaking of Father Mathew's love of giving, said that "it was a generosity which would be profligate if we did not remember it was the poor who were its object. His fellow-countrymen and others were not ungenerous to him, but he was doubly generous to God's poor. What he received with one hand he gave away with two, and I verily believe that beyond the clothes he wore, and the very humble house in which he resided, he lived in a state of truly apostolic poverty. That very house itself was hardly a home; it was more a bureau from which he administered a large undertaking and dispensed a more than princely bounty."

Theobald Mathew's school career was unmarked by any evidence of unusual ability. He was studious rather than brilliant, but his influence over his companions was considerable, and always used for good, and he was a popular boy among teachers and fellow-students. From school he passed on to Maynooth, where it was intended he should complete his studies for the priesthood, but we see him attracted by the loving spirit and devotion to the poor which are the distinguishing characteristics of the sons of St. Francis, joining himself to the lowly Order of Franciscan Capuchins in Dublin. Here, on Easter Saturday, 1814, he was ordained priest, being then in his twenty-fourth year.

The young priest's first mission was in Kilkenny, where he soon became known and loved, especially among the poor, who considered this holy young friar, so winning of speech, so good and noble-looking, so unaffected and affectionate, their own especial property, because of his unwearied devotion to their service.

We next find Father Mathew established at the "Little Friary" at Cork. The name of this smallest of Capuchin convents was certainly *apropos*, not only to its extremely limited proportions (the chapel was barely forty-three feet in length, and the dormitories, refectory, offices, etc., were represented by two small rooms and a loft), but to the number of the community, which consisted simply of the Superior, Father Donovan, and his assistant, Father Mathew. But the world's greatest workers have not always been magnificently lodged. And even before Father Mathew had thrown himself heart and soul into the cause which was to go so far towards regenerating his country and making his name known and revered wherever the race he served so faithfully had

penetrated, he had been a man useful in his generation beyond the ordinary and limited usefulness of every man who faithfully fulfils the duties of his calling. For close at hand, almost within the shadow of the Little Friary, he had established a flourishing school for girls, where, in addition to the literary instructions suitable to their condition, the pupils were taught various branches of remunerative needle-work, which secured to them an independent future. Nor, though this girls' school was his work of predilection, were boys neglected by Father Mathew, who loved the younger members of his flock with peculiar tenderness, and could never see a child without wishing to improve it or give it pleasure. He organised the boys and young men who attended the Friary chapel into societies, furnished the library for their use, encouraged the rich to help and have a brotherly interest in the poor, the instructed to teach the ignorant, and rewarded his young helpers, from time to time, with delightful trips into the country and other treats to encourage them in their well-doing.

The twenty-four years during which Father Mathew laboured so untiringly among the people of Cork, teaching them, preaching to them, helping them in so many ways, and above all, loving them, and understanding them *au fond*—their virtues and their failings—as a father comprehends his children, was a fitting novitiate for the great work he was destined later on to achieve. And during his ministrations, when with his own hands he tended them in the terrible cholera outbreak of 1832, superintending, night after night, the efforts of the hospital nurses, whose intelligent care saved many of the stricken; consoling, with the aids of religion, those to whom recovery was impossible, and providing with inexhaustible charity for the widows and orphans bereft of all means of support—these people, of a race surely the most warm-hearted and grateful of any on God's earth, grew so to love and venerate this *Soggarth aroon* that when he came later to demand a sacrifice from them they could deny him nothing.

Father Mathew's daily and intimate intercourse with the people among whom he worked, gave him ample opportunity for noting the untold misery of which intemperance was the direct cause. In the Cork Workhouse, of which he was one of the governors, many of the wretched, broken-down inmates had once been respectable tradesmen, living in humble com-

fort with their families growing up happily around them. Now they dragged out the last days of their lives in degradation and misery, their unfortunate children eating the bitter bread of some barrack State institution, or gaining their livelihood by means shameful in the descendants of honest men. Hospitals, gaols, and lunatic asylums all told the same dismal story—for sixty years ago the Irish peasants and working classes generally, ill-fed, ill-housed, ill-clothed, and slowly suffering a recovery from the paralyzing effects of penal laws, were fatally subject to the thralldom of a vice which lulled them into temporary forgetfulness of their troubles. In spite of the inherent light-heartedness and happy faculty of looking at the brighter side of things (if either side presented any gleam of brightness) with which Heaven had dowered them, life held little joy for these luckless mortals; the dampness of their "soft" climate chilled their poorly nourished vitality, and they were surely not altogether without excuse if, when temptation presented itself to them under the seductive disguise of an elixir, which for the moment brought exhilaration, sustenance, heat, and oblivion, they were so often unable to resist it.

During Father Mathew's long career in Cork he had, in sermons and private admonitions, warned his flock of the terrible risk to body and soul which they ran when they gave themselves up to intemperance. Full of the tenderness and compassion for erring human nature, which early gained for him the sobriquet of the "Sinner's Friend," there were none outside the pale of his boundless charity; but his fatherly heart, so especially tender to children, and so rejoicing in their happiness and innocence, was torn with grief in witnessing the sufferings these little ones endured in a home desecrated by drunkenness, where happiness had no foothold, and whence innocence soon fled. If he could have been hard and unforgiving to any human being, it would have been to the besotted parents who, maddened with whiskey, ill-treated the hapless children whose dreadful cry of hunger they had left themselves without the means to still.

The great crusade against intemperance, of which Father Mathew became the Apostle, was not in the first case initiated by him, any more than America was first discovered by Christopher Columbus; though the earlier exploits were in each case so completely overshadowed by the achievements of the greater men who succeeded the pioneers, that scarcely any

record remains of the pre-Mathew and the pre-Columbus worthies. But in such records as do remain, it is duly attested that the "grandfather of the temperance cause" was William Martin, a benevolent Quaker, who, with a little band of philanthropic friends, worked with much energy and little success to diminish the evil of intemperance in Cork eight or ten years before the man who was to be afterwards known as the Apostle, took the matter in hand. And, moreover, it was the oft-iterated appeal of William Martin—"O Theobald Mathew, if thou wouldst only give thy aid, much good could be done in this city"—which at length, and almost against his will, drew Father Mathew into a movement which, if it succeeded, would bring ruin on many of his much loved kinsfolk and friends, whose daily bread depended on the distilleries and breweries, which were the most flourishing enterprises in the country at that time. But, though family affection was all his life one of the distinguishing traits of Father Mathew's essentially loving nature, no consideration of this kind could hold him back when he had once realised that the cause was one which he was bound to take up, and that the work urged on him by William Martin was for the glory of God and the good of his neighbour, and could not conscientiously be shirked.

Father Mathew did not come to a decision on the point without much thought and anxious prayer ; but, once decided, there was no wavering or looking back, no misgiving as to the result of following what he felt clearly to be the Divine will, no temporising as to the sufficiency of "Moderation" in the use of stimulants, rather than the humiliating pledge of total abstinence. The scourge of intemperance, which was devastating the country, was not one to be met with half measures, nor were a people tempted so much as they were competent to judge where moderation ended and excess began. The only real security for habitual drunkards was to keep clear of temptation, or, as William Martin put it, "not to touch, taste, or handle the poison"; and to those who had not to fight against the vice, Father Mathew counted it a small sacrifice to give up, for example sake, an indulgence, which was such a manifest danger to the weaker brethren. The inaugural meeting of Father Mathew's Temperance Society took place on the 10th April, 1838. As is often the case in undertakings destined to produce great fruit, the seed sown, though vital, was apparently insignificant ; and none present—least of all,

perhaps, he who set the seed—foresaw the harvest which, under God's blessing, was to spring from it. This meeting was appropriately held in the schoolroom established by Father Mathew himself, where, for nearly twenty years, the children of the poor had been taught, trained, and fitted for the business of life, under the direct supervision of the devoted priest, who spent himself so willingly in their service. The attendance was not large, and consisted mainly of William Martin and colleagues of the older Temperance Society, overjoyed at having at last enlisted Father Mathew in the cause they had so much at heart, and of some personal followers of the new adherent of temperance. Father Mathew took the chair, described the object for which the meeting was convened, and told of the persistency with which he had been urged to join in the good work by gentlemen who differed from him in religion. Here are the modest, unexaggerated words with which he inaugurated the movement which was destined to work a moral revolution in the country.

"These gentlemen," he said, speaking of William Martin and his friends, "are good enough to say that I could be useful in promoting the great virtue of temperance, and arresting the spread of drunkenness. I am quite alive to the evils which this vice brings with it, especially to the humbler classes, who are naturally more exposed to its temptation, and liable to yield to its seductive influences. I have always endeavoured, as a minister of religion, to discourage drunkenness; not with the success I desired, it is true; but I yielded to no one in my wish to see our working classes sober and self-respecting. I could not refuse to listen to the many appeals made to me. Your respected friend, Mr. Martin, has often asked me to do what I am about to do this night, and Mr. Olden, whom you well know, has told me that 'the mission was from God, and that I should not reject it.' My dear friends, I much fear that your kind partiality has made you overlook my many defects, and attribute to me merits which I am very far from possessing; but if, through any humble instrumentality of mine, I can do good to my fellow-creatures and give glory to God, I feel I am bound, as a minister of the Gospel, to throw all personal considerations aside, and try and give a helping hand to gentlemen who have afforded me so excellent an example. Indeed, if only one poor soul could be rescued from destruction by what we are now attempting, it would be giving glory to God, and well worthy of all the

trouble we could take. No person in health has any need of intoxicating drinks. My dear friends, you don't require them, nor do I require them. Many of you here have proved that they can be done without, for you are strong in health, and in possession of all your faculties. After much reflection on the subject, I have come to the conviction that there is no necessity for them for anyone in good health, and I advise you all to follow my example. I will be the first to sign my name in the book which is on the table, and I hope we shall soon have it full."

He then advanced to the table, and exclaiming, "Here goes in the name of God," signed his name to what came to be known as Father Mathew's Total Abstinence Pledge, the form of which was : "I promise to abstain from all intoxicating drinks, except used medicinally, and by order of a medical man, and to discountenance the cause and practice of intemperance." His example was followed on the spot by sixty recruits, and during his lifetime (as credibly affirmed) by the amazing number of seven million persons.

The words of the opening address seem inadequate to produce so satisfactory a result as sixty converts, for they have neither the fire nor the enthusiasm by which he learned later on not only to sway the masses of his own sympathetic and easily-moved race to his will, but scarcely less completely, critical and cynical aliens, not in the least disposed to be moved by the words of an Irish monk. But it must be remembered that these words, which do not look very impressive set down in lifeless type, were very different when they issued, glowing with affection, from the lips of a man who had been the truest friend and helper of the audience upon whose eager ears they fell. Father Mathew's life among his people, while a generation of them had grown from infancy to manhood, had prepared them to confidently follow his lead, however repugnant to their nature might be the road of self-sacrifice he invited them to travel. Since he had been among them, none had appealed to him in vain ; whatever their need, they could always count on his sympathy and help. Their sorrows were his sorrows, their joys his joys ; and the alms which flowed from his hands were an extravagance of charity. Many friends made him the channel of their bounties, and, to quote the clerk of his chapel, who was best acquainted with his method of dealing with those who applied to him for aid, "If the streets of Cork were paved with gold, and if Father

Mathew had entire control over them, there would not be a paving-stone in all Cork at the end of the year."

Once set in motion, this ever-increasing body advanced with such prodigious strides that even Father Mathew, man of untiring energy and masterly organising power as he was, could scarcely keep pace with the constant demands on his time which it involved. In the business of haranguing the multitudes who attended his meetings, he had effective aid from several friends, including Friend William Martin, whose interest in the cause was so genuine and generous, that it increased rather than diminished when he had handed the leadership over to abler hands. These zealous lieutenants of the commander-in-chief added greatly to the attraction of the meetings by the brilliancy and versatility of their addresses, in which they by turns harrowed the feelings of their audience by depicting in forcible and realistic terms the degradation and utter misery which drunkenness entails on its victims, or cheered them by bringing before their minds pictures of the blessed contentment, prosperity, and joy which dwelt in happy homes where temperance reigned. Some of the habitual speakers at these meetings were able to enliven the proceedings by droll stories, sprightly mimicry, and true touches of pathos; but none brought to the cause more honest enthusiasm than William Martin, and his set speech, or rather the peroration to it: "What does the racehorse drink? Water. What does the elephant drink? Water. What does the lion drink? Water. It is good for man, beast, and bird.

"Drink from the bubbling fountain free,
'Twas Samson's drink, and good for thee,"

was always sure to bring down the house, and be rewarded by storms of applause. But, if others could urge, persuade, cajole, or compel repentant drunkards to the point of taking the pledge, it was Father Mathew who must administer it, as, indeed, it was generally some word of his which clinched the work of persuasion begun by the temperance orators. The fidelity with which the first of Father Mathew's disciples held to their pledge filled the people with a kind of half-belief that his touch and blessing killed the horrible craving for stimulants which they found it so difficult to battle with. At any rate, they had living examples before their eyes of men who, under God's blessing had, through Father Mathew's help,

found it possible to free themselves from the slavery of intemperance. The restored health and improved prospects of cases a short time ago as helpless as their own was a strong incentive to make the sacrifice of giving up a dangerous indulgence (for good example is almost as potent as bad) ; and so, as the days went on, hundreds and hundreds of men and women knelt before Father Mathew, and repeated the words of the pledge, till it seemed as if his most sanguine dreams were to be fulfilled, and not only Cork, but the entire island, and much of the world beyond, were to be regenerated. Of course, among such vast multitudes there were some backsliders ; but before the evil days of the famine their number was inconsiderable, not only men and women, who promised for themselves, keeping their promise faithfully through all temptations to the day of their death, but infants, whose mothers or nurses had promised for them, feeling themselves bound, when they came to the use of reason, to keep the pledge made in their name. One of these infant disciples of Father Mathew's when he grew to be a man, developed a hot-headed, excitable temper, which was a constant cause of trouble to him in the not too considerate community of an Australian gold field, where he had established himself. The intemperance of his language was the cause of many breaches of the peace, and when poor K. recovered his temper after some specially mad prank, he would ejaculate, " Lord, what a fool I am. God be with my poor old nurse, who got Father Mathew to put this temperance medal on me before I was two years old. When I can make such an ass of myself sober, and flare up fit to kill a man for nothing, what would I be doing at all if I were drunk ? "

Sometimes Father Mathew's recruits signalled their last day of liberty (before signing the pledge, which was to put an end for ever to such unlawful indulgence) by a last carouse ; and, strange to say, men who took the pledge when they were barely capable of repeating the necessary words, often kept it faithfully, and became new men from the moment they had made the promise. J. F. Maguire describes very graphically Father Mathew's little parlour, where the roll-book was kept and the pledge administered, which was as odorous of whiskey and porter, especially on the evenings of Saturday and Monday, as any tap-room in Cork. At all hours of the day and evening—even to ten or eleven o'clock at night—batches of ten, twenty, or even thirty, might be seen waiting to be enrolled.

Some were sober and penitent ; others smelling strongly of their recent potations, and ashamed to commit themselves by uttering a word ; more, boisterous and rude, their poor wives and mothers endeavouring to soothe and keep them under control.

One of this class—a big, brawny fellow, with rough voice, bloodshot eyes, and tattered clothes—would roar out : “ I won’t take the pledge. I’ll be —— if I do. Is it me ? What oc-oc-occasion have I for it ? I won’t demane meself by takin’ it. I always stood a trate, and I’ll stand it again. Me take it ! Let me go, woman ! I tell you, leave me go ! ” “ Oh, Patsy, darlin’, don’t expose yourself ; you know I’m for your good. And what would his riverence say if he heard you ? Do, *alanna*, be quiet, and wait for the priest.” Then Father Mathew would enter, saying in a cheerful voice to Patsy (as if that gentleman had come of his own free will to implore the pledge at his hands) : “ Welcome ! welcome ! my dear. Delighted to see you. Glad you are come to me. You are doing a good day’s work for yourself and your family. You will have God’s blessing on your head. Poverty is no crime, my dear child ; it is sin alone that lowers us in the eyes of God. Kneel down, my dear (a strong pressure on Patsy’s shoulder, under which he reluctantly sinks on his knees), and repeat the words of the pledge after me ; and then I will mark you with the sign of the Cross, and pray God to keep you from temptation.” What could poor Patsy do but yield, as that magnetic hand rested on his tangled locks ? And so, rescued from his foe almost against his will, Patsy, who was really a decent fellow at bottom, would not “ demane ” himself by breaking the solemn promise he had made, and, soon, catching the *esprit de corps* of the organisation, which put him on his mettle to do as well as his neighbours, he marched in the processions, and took part in all the ceremonials, a sober, respectable man. “ The woman that owned him ” rejoiced in new-found happiness, and his little children ceased to wail for bread.

In the month of January, 1839, nine months from the day when Father Mathew had signed his name in the new roll-book of his Temperance organisation, he had already 200,000 associates, a success so unexampled that his name began to be known far beyond the limits where it had been so long revered and loved. Heretofore, pilgrims from the neighbouring counties, drawn by the fame of his doings, flocked to his little

dwelling in Cove-street, certain of a kindly reception, and of having the pledge administered to them by the Apostle of Temperance himself. Most of these visitors needed to be fed, and to be sympathised with and advised, some of them to be helped with a trifle towards the cost of their return journey. The expenses entailed on Father Mathew by his multitudinous visitors were very considerable, and as his resources were not increased, he soon became involved in debt. This was lamentable, but inevitable, for Father Mathew, who did not know how to say "no" to the most casual beggar, could still less refrain from succouring footsore and weary travellers who had come thirty, fifty, eighty, or a hundred miles in order to take the pledge. And from this time forward he had the added expense of missionary work, for soon applications came pouring in from every side begging him to come to distant parts of the country, to administer the pledge. Limerick was the first scene of his temperance labours outside his own county. Here, in addition to the joy he always felt in promoting the cause, he had the pleasure of spending a few days with his sister, Mrs. Dunbar. Father Mathew, who was so loving to everyone with whom he had dealings, had an inexhaustible fund of tenderness for his own people, and revelled in family gatherings. Throughout his busy life he always allowed himself an annual holiday which he spent in his native Tipperary, usually in the house of his elder brother, John, and surrounded by the whole clan Mathew, whom he caused to be summoned to the festival. Here he absolutely banished from his mind for a few days all the cares and burthens of his life, giving himself up to the joy of social intercourse, to family talks with his brothers and sisters, and delightful romps with his nephews and nieces, with whom their "Reverend Uncle" was prime favourite. For these privileged little people he revived his old habit of feast-giving, evincing a genius for divining the particular dainties which most pleased them. And his beaming cordiality and boyish gaiety made up to the elders of the party for the absence of the customary wine and spirits from the dinner table, over which he so hospitably presided. Mrs. Dunbar was many years younger than her brother, and it was therefore with something of filial affection that she welcomed him to her home when he came on his first mission to Limerick. The news of his coming was borne from village to village, everywhere producing the utmost enthusiasm. Long before

his arrival in the city it was densely packed with visitors from the surrounding towns. The hospitable citizens did all they could to accommodate their horde of guests, but it was a difficult matter to withstand this new siege of Limerick, and provisions threatened to run out, so that there seemed to be some risk that the weary pilgrims would be compelled to fast from food as well as to abstain from drinking of the strong drinks which Father Mathew had come to pledge them against.

During four days Father Mathew worked from early dawn to night in Limerick, preaching, exhorting, encouraging; and the fruits of that first Mission were 150,000 new adherents, to whom he administered the pledge. Was it any wonder that a man who could achieve such a stupendous result in less than a week's time should believe that the curse of intemperance would in a short time be effectually banished from the country which it was ruining; and that, while he squandered his health and strength in furthering the cause, until they were entirely spent, he should have shown some of the same reckless prodigality about money matters.

One of the charges brought against him by those who could not comprehend a man working so persistently as he did without being actuated by some selfish motive, was that he made money of his advocacy of temperance by the sale of the medals, which most of his disciples wore to remind them of their pledge. It is not probable that any human being could have done Father Mathew's saving work among an impoverished people, and at the same time conducted a thriving business; but if so variously gifted a person ever existed as this combination would have needed, he would have been altogether different from our hero, who, though endowed with great practical sagacity and genius for organising, had no faculty for amassing money, and never knew how to keep a coin in his possession while the poor around him were hungry, bare of clothing, ill-sheltered, or in want of any necessary which he could obtain for them. And, as this Franciscan friar, good and holy as he was, had what the French call *les défauts de ses qualités*, it must be admitted that out of the spontaneous generosity of his nature he sometimes gave for the mere pleasure of giving. Had he listened to the dictates of prudence when he felt an impulse to bestow silver medals on people who could quite well have afforded to buy them, he would have saved himself endless worry and trouble, and the cause some adverse judgment. But we must accept

our social reformers as they are, with their inevitable human imperfections and fallibilities ; and be thankful when, as in Father Mathew's case, the blemish we are called upon to overlook in a man who has done much for his kind is nothing that need weaken our admiration or love, but only a most endearing virtue allowed to run into excess.

Here are two pictures of the Apostle of Temperance in his own home, which give an idea of the holy poverty befitting his calling, in which he lived, at a time when his name and fame had spread far beyond the limits of his native land :—

“ If Father Mathew lived in a cloister, he could not have lived more modestly and quietly than he did. His principal room—his only room save that in which he slept—was at once breakfast and dining-room, study and reception-room. It certainly did not exceed 16 ft. from wall to wall. Not a morsel of carpet concealed the well-washed boards ; while the furniture consisted of the barest necessities—a centre table, a sideboard, a side-table, some chairs, and a writing-desk. On the side-table was a large-sized bust of Lord Morpeth, the popular Secretary for Ireland, and friend of Father Mathew. Two enormous volumes of the Sacred Scriptures, one containing the Old and the other the New Testament, flanked the bust ; and a glass filled with flowers, when flowers were in season, completed the adornment of this show-table. On the wall opposite the fireplace hung a good oil painting—a portrait of Cardinal Micara, the head of the Capuchins, who had constantly exhibited the deepest interest in the career of the illustrious Irish friar. Opposite the windows, a good engraving of a celebrated picture of the Holy Family was suspended. But, framed with richness and glazed with reverent care, was a marvellous production in worsted, intended to represent, and fondly believed by the donor and artist, as well as by its graceful recipient, to represent the religious profession of St. Clare. The desk was bespattered with ink, and otherwise exhibited signs of being an article of furniture more useful than ornamental. But everything, save the said desk, was neat and in perfect order. If it were poverty, it was willingly and honestly assumed ; but the neatness and order bespoke the presence and influence of a gentleman. In this modest apartment the Apostle of Temperance was visited by many of the great and distinguished of the earth, and here he exercised a hospitality which made those who partook of it experience that

most agreeable of all feelings in the mind of a guest—namely, the consciousness of being welcome and at home.” *

“ We had long known Father Mathew, but to see the great moral reformer, who was changing the character of a nation, living contentedly in a shabby little house, placarded outside and in with teetotal songs and broadsheets, with no attendant but one feeble old man, helping himself to whatever was wanted at table with unaffected and cheerful simplicity, leaving his guests or his meals on the call of a peasant or a labourer who snatched a moment’s leisure to take the pledge, was to comprehend the lives of the saints, as we had never done before.” †

In the meantime, the great work went on triumphantly ; and already in Cork and its surrounding counties a marked change for the better had come over the population. Industry and restored health, the result of better habits, brought prosperity back to many an humble home, from which it had appeared permanently banished ; and the prospect of happier days seemed at last to be dawning in Ireland. Wherever Father Mathew went he was hailed as a deliverer and, in his walks about, his heart was gladdened by the sight of men whom he had reclaimed from vice and misery. Invitations from various parts of the country poured in on him faster than he could accept them, and everywhere he went his labours were rewarded with results such as those which crowned his first visit to Limerick. By this time the organisation was so increased that every town in Ireland had its local society. Temperance bands enlivened the streets with their joyous strains. Temperance banners floated proudly in imposing processions, temperance reading-rooms (where men could meet and discuss the news in the papers) became formidable rivals to the public houses, which had heretofore been the only haunts of men, who sometimes craved for more warmth, light, and fellowship than could be found in their own wretched lodgings. Of course, these bands, banners, and reading-rooms, and the continual travelling which his work necessitated, entailed a constant outlay ; and though the friends of Father Mathew and of the cause, were most generous to him, it was not long before he was involved in money troubles which grievously hampered and distressed him. It was a wonderful tribute, not only to Father Mathew’s loving and lovable nature, but to

* *Father Mathew’s Biography*, by John Francis Maguire, M.P.

† Sir Charles Gavan Duffy’s *Young Ireland*.

the disinterestedness of men when they have no misgivings as to the motives which actuate those who thwart them, that, so far from detesting him, as it might have been expected they would, Father Mathew had many good friends and efficient helpers among brewers and distillers, whose business he had made it his mission to destroy. Once, when he was in Dublin, collecting money to build his new church, he applied, as he himself relates, in fear and trembling, for help to Mr. George Roe, a noted distiller. This generous and magnanimous man, instead of refusing an application which, coming from such a source, savoured somewhat of audacity, handed him a handsome subscription, saying, "No man has done me more injury than you have, Father Mathew ; but, I forget all in the great good you have done my country."

And prejudice, which is even stronger and more difficult to subdue than self-interest, melted before Father Mathew's genuine love of his kind, which was universal and all-embracing, knowing neither class, distinction, nor bigotry. Mr. Frank Mathew, in his recent graphic sketch of *Life and Times* of his illustrious kinsman, says : "There was an open lovingness about him that would have seemed strange to English eyes. He usually addressed his friends as 'my dear,' and liked walking arm-in-arm or with his hand on a friend's shoulder. The first time he was seen in the slums, walking arm-in-arm with a Protestant clergyman, the people rushed to their doors in headlong excitement. It seemed incredible. Parsons and priests were expected to be mortal enemies." Mr. Mathew also relates how, at one of his uncle's southern meetings, a new recruit said to him, tragically, "Ah, Father, if you only knew what I am, t'isn't after blessing me you would be." "And what are you, then ?" "Father, I am an Orangeman." "God bless you, my dear, I don't care if you are a lemonman." And hardly in his own city of Cork was he more fêted and followed than he was in the most Presbyterian counties of Ulster when he went to administer the pledge. The progress of temperance was one continual triumph, most cheering to the heart of Father Mathew. Enthusiastic Orangemen swelled the great procession which went out to welcome him ; and at Clones the unwonted spectacle was presented to the public of Orange flags waving proudly to do honour to a Catholic priest. Smith O'Brien wrote of Father Mathew :—"For myself, whether Father Mathew be or be not canonised as a saint by the Church of Rome, I am dis-

posed to regard him as an apostle who was specially deputed on a divine mission by the Almighty, and invested with power almost miraculous. To none of the ordinary operations of human agency can I ascribe the success which attended his efforts to repress one of the besetting sins of the Irish nation." But nothing which any of his sympathetic well-wishers could say to him, or of him, was more generous than the tribute which was daily paid to him by men alien in race and religion, but keenly appreciative of his devoted services to humanity. Here are a few flowers of rhetoric culled at random from letters and speeches about Father Mathew and his cause; and, to begin with, a few phrases from an address delivered at Boston by the American writer, Dr. Channing:—

"In the moral point of view, the Ireland of the past is banished—a new Ireland has started into life; five millions of her population have taken the pledge of total abstinence; and instances of breaking the pledge are very rare. The great national anniversaries, on which the whole labouring population used to be dissolved in excesses, are now given to innocent pleasures. The excise on ardent spirits has now been diminished nearly a million sterling. History records no revolution like this: it is the great event of the present day. Father Mathew, the leader in this moral revolution, ranks far above heroes and statesmen. However, as Protestants, we may question the claims of departed saints, here is a living minister, if he may be judged from one work, who deserves to be canonised, and whose name should be placed in the Calendar not far below the Apostles."

Lord Morpeth, the Irish Secretary, thus referred to his labours:—"He needs not, and looks not for, our praise—higher motives impel him, and higher agencies befriend him. I will not go into the details of this transformation, but I will ask, considering this pure and lofty renovation of a nation's virtue, is there anything which seems too large to hope for, or too bright to realise?"

In the meantime, while those and countless other pleasant and encouraging things were being said, the wearing, never-ending work of the missionary went on, till, except while he was on the altar saying Mass, or asleep in the very depths of the night—for late evening and early morning found him ready to give the pledge—Father Mathew had few minutes which he could call his own. Usually serene and equable of temperament

there were seasons of depression which overcame him at times, when the difficulties and responsibilities of his position weighed too heavily on him. But he was by nature bright and hopeful, and the extraordinary success of his mission upheld him, and urged him on to further exertions ; and, though he was absolutely deficient in musical ear—or rather, perhaps, because of that deficiency—the blaring of his temperance bands could generally banish all gloom from his mind, and lead its disturbed thoughts back again to dwell with gratitude and delight on the great work which God had enabled him to do. From an early day in the movement these bands were a great feature in the organisation. Father Mathew established them at great personal trouble and expense, because he loved his people to be happy, and constantly strove by every means at his disposal to provide innocent and rational amusement to make up for the dangerous and degrading form of excitement from which he sought to wean them. No backsliders who had broken the pledge were ever permitted to march in the processions, which were headed by the temperance bands, so that soon their strains came to be identified with industry, prosperity, and continuance in well-doing ; and, no matter how inharmonious and untrained the performers, the music they produced could not but sound inspiring in the ears of all who realised the good news which it announced. Mr. Maguire, who appears to have been gifted with the musical taste which Father Mathew lacked, gives an amusing account of the performance of a village band which had been established to cheer and delight the members with strains of melody. “ I had been requested,” he says, “ by Father Mathew to accompany him to the Festival ; and as the carriage approached the door of the house in which the party was to be held, we were saluted by a startling outburst of complicated sounds, that on the whole bore some resemblance to the air generally known as the ‘ Conquering Hero.’ Had not the spirit of the horses been rather tamed down by a long pull, it would have been difficult to say what might have happened, for the big drum was beaten by the village blacksmith, who, was to do him the barest justice, a powerful performer. Of course, there was a dense crowd assembled in a moment in front of the ‘ hall,’ as it was proudly designated, and cheer after cheer welcomed the arrival of the world-renowned Apostle of Temperance. In a moment, and as if by impulse, a ‘ batch ’ was formed in a

small semi-circle, down on their knees in the street, and for a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes Father Mathew was hard at work administering the pledge in the centre of the little village.

"At length we were enabled to enter the hall. . . . On a raised and railed-off platform at the end of the room the band had taken their position, and as Father Mathew entered the 'Conquering Hero' was again given in a style which would have impelled the 'Enraged Musician' to instantaneous suicide, had he been present at that merciless piece of instrumentation. But the audience, whose ears were in their hearts, could hear no discord whatever. And Father Mathew, looking as noble as a king, beamed with delight, his eyes and lips smiling in concert. . . . When the last bar was concluded, up rose Father Mathew, who, bowing with grace towards the orchestra, said: 'Thank you, gentlemen, thank you very much, for your beautiful music!' The band was in a flutter of ecstasy at this public tribute from 'one of the greatest men in the world,' and not a member present but felt the compliment. 'I knew, sir,' said a village dame to me, 'that his reverence would be plazed. Faith, sir, I think the boys play as well as the army, if not better.'"

It is unnecessary to follow in detail Father Mathew's mission from town to town over Ireland. East and west, and south and north (as Lars Porsena's messengers carried his summons to march on Rome), he carried this crusade to all parts of the island; and, when it is remembered that all the journeying which this necessitated was done in the earliest days of railways, such records as the following, culled from a Cork newspaper of November, 1847, helps us to understand the immense quantity of work which he got through:—

"FATHER MATHEW

Leaves town this evening on a temperance tour. He is to preach and administer the pledge in Derry, on Sunday, the 7th; in Sligo, on Wednesday, the 10th; and in Strabane, on Sunday, the 14th. He will return to Cork on Thursday, the 18th instant."

Perhaps of all his successes, the one which most gratified him was the result of his visit to Maynooth, where he had been invited by the President. He believed so much in the effect of good example that he was almost as glad to pledge a little

child or absolutely sober man to total abstinence as a confirmed drunkard ; so it may well be imagined how delighted he was to draw into his temperance net in one haul 250 ecclesiastical students, whose position towards the people would later on make their example so doubly powerful ; for, as Father Mathew himself said, their example would have a powerful influence on many others, who would be induced to emulate their virtuous and noble resolution either from motives of religion and moral purification, or from necessity and a distrust of their own weakness in withstanding temptation.

In his zeal for making " converts," neither age nor condition was a protection against his seductive arts. Many a young fellow was bound hand and foot before he knew where he was. " My dear child, I know you wish to oblige me," would be murmured in the softest and most winning accents. " Indeed I would, Father Mathew, you *know* that, sir," the victim would incautiously reply. " Well, my dear, I assure you, you would greatly oblige me if you would join our society, and give me the benefit of your influence." " But, Father Mathew, I assure you I have no occasion for it. I was never drunk in my life." " Of course you were not, my dear, and therefore it will be no sacrifice to you—you have nothing to give up, as others have, and you will enjoy the consciousness of having afforded a good example to others. My dear child, don't refuse me the favour." And, before the victim knew where he was, he found himself on his knees repeating the words of the pledge, and on rising up he was a Mathewite, enrolled in the ranks of temperance, with a silver medal hanging round his neck—the same medal which his captor had worn a moment before. Meet him in a coach or train, meet him in the street, visit him, or be visited by him, it was all the same—there was no escape. In flight alone was there protection from the wiles of one who was as well versed in the arts of the recruiting-sergeant as in the duties and responsibilities of a chief and leader.

Oftentimes the recruits who cost him most trouble, and seemed almost impossible to reclaim, were those who, when once pledged, became the most steadfast and strong against temptation. Such a one was " Red Denis," a Belfast porter, who, though an honest, intelligent fellow, was seldom quite sober. Denis knew his own weakness, and was quite willing to meet Father Mathew half-way, but total abstinence was a sacrifice he would not hear of. He talked the matter over with the

Apostle, and said he was aware he was destroying himself, and was thinking of taking the pledge, or at least a partial pledge ; but Father Mathew must allow him to have one darby a day. " I'll take the pledge if your reverence will only give me one darby a day." " No, no ; you must give it up entirely, or I can't let you take the pledge." " Why, thin, Father Mathew, your reverence, I tell you 't isn't in the power of God Almighty to make me do without whiskey entirely." " Shame, sir, shame ! to use such language. You should not dare say what you have said. The power of God is omnipotent, and He can do much more than change the heart of a miserable drunkard," said Father Mathew, with unusual severity. " Well, your reverence, I beg God's pardon and yours, but I never can do without a darby." " Go now, my dear, and come back to me in a week, when you may be in a better frame of mind." At the end of the week back came Denis. " 'Tis no good, your reverence, without you allow me the darby of whiskey ; I'm afeard of myself entirely." " Denis," said Father Mathew, in his most impressive manner, " kneel down this moment and repeat the words of the pledge after me, and I tell you that God will give you strength to resist temptation for the future. I promise you that He will give you strength and grace to do so—I promise it to you in His name." Denis was overpowered by the solemnity of the priest's voice and manner, and he knelt and took the pledge with great earnestness. He rose from his knees a determined teetotaller, and from that moment to the last hour of his life he never afterwards tasted whiskey or strong drink of any kind. To use his own words, " a darby would choke him."

Father Mathew, who had set himself the prodigious task of regenerating Ireland morally, and of making the people sober, self-respecting, and industrious, found this work sufficiently engrossing, and held himself and his movement resolutely apart from politics, though O'Connell, and afterwards the Young Irelanders, would have gladly welcomed as recognised adherents his vast society of well-conducted, self-disciplined men. The neutrality which he observed was far, indeed, from meaning indifference to the welfare of his country, it only meant that he could not risk the success of his cause by allowing any other interest to become involved with that of Temperance. His cares and responsibilities were already almost more than one man could bear, and if they became complicated with Repeal or with any other political movement,

they would have completely overwhelmed him. Thus later in the year 1849, in his mission to America, he endeavoured to steer clear of the fierce hostility raging between the North and South. Slavery was abhorrent to every instinct of his nature, but his mission in life was to spread temperance among slave-owners as well as among the rest of mankind, and he could not risk his cause in the South by taking side as an abolitionist. The neutral stand which he endeavoured to take (though he did not disguise on which side his sympathies lay) exposed him to much misrepresentation in the States. The anti-Slavery society who had urged him "to bear a clear and unequivocal testimony, both in public and private, against the enslavement of any portion of the human race," accused him of "servility," because he replied : "I have as much as I can do to save men from the slavery of intemperance without attempting to overthrow any other kind of slavery"; while, on the other hand, Governor Lampkin, of Georgia, who had invited him to that State, called on him to recant all sympathy with the North on pain of the invitation being withdrawn. "We will welcome no one among us," wrote the gentlemen, "who fraternises himself or encourages others to do so, with a faction which would recklessly shiver the Union into fragments ; which would reek its unhallowed hands red as crimson in human blood ; which, in a word, seems to combine in one mass all the elements of thought, action, and feeling peculiar to our troublous times."

But long before crossing the Atlantic Father Mathew extended his mission beyond Ireland. Very early in his movement the fame of his doings at home induced bishops, priests, and philanthropists to urge him to visit England and Scotland, where, indeed, he would find multitudes of his own people in sore need of his ministrations. Accordingly, in 1842, his work being well under weigh in Ireland, he was free to set out for Glasgow. His reception there was as cordial and enthusiastic as could have been accorded to him in his own city of Cork, and he was soon hard at work in administering the pledge to thousands of applicants. Many sick people were brought to him that he might bless them, for he had worked such wonders in reforming incorrigible drunkards, that, in spite of his vehement denial of having any gift of healing, it was believed he could still pain by the touch of his hand. After his death a well-known physician of that day, Dr. Barter, writing on this subject, said :—"Father Mathew possessed in a large degree the power of animal magnetism, and I believe

that the paralytic affection from which he suffered, and which brought his valuable life to an untimely end, was produced by an undue expenditure of this power. His nervous power was lowered by imparting his health and vigour to thousands."

On his return from his campaign in Glasgow he was received in Cork with the honours due to a conqueror fresh from the theatre of his triumphs. His people, who loved and revered him, were overjoyed that their own Father Mathew, who had laboured among them so long and faithfully, was recognised from beyond the seas for the apostolic man they knew him to be. And as in days of old Erin had sent forth missionaries to carry the light of the Gospel to the furthestmost ends of the earth, so now they beheld in imagination their Apostle bringing distant nations and peoples who had fallen into the bondage of vice and misery back to the freedom of self-possession and self-respect. The work at home received an impetus from his work in Scotland, and went on with ever-increasing results. In the summer of 1843, when, to quote himself, he had "with the Divine assistance hoisted the banner of Temperance in almost every parish in Ireland," he made arrangements to visit England, from whence the most urgent and appealing invitations had long been pouring in. Friends of the cause he advocated of every creed and every section of society rivalled his own countrymen in their anxiety to secure his co-operation, and everywhere he went; in Liverpool, Manchester, Salford, Huddersfield, Wakefield, and Leeds, a fervour of enthusiasm awaited him, and thousands of new adherents took the pledge from his hands.

In London Father Mathew had an opportunity of contrasting the extremes of misery and magnificence, which are, perhaps, nowhere in this wide world more marked than in that vast city, peopled east and west by men so differently lodged, fed, taught, and surrounded so as to produce types of human beings almost as dissimilar as if there were no community of race, religion, or fatherland between them. Father Mathew's missionary work was naturally to be found in the abodes of misery and want, where drunkenness ran riot. Here, as at home, his days were spent in affectionate pleading; here he spent himself entreating, exhorting, constraining men to save themselves body and soul from the vice which was destroying them (during this English mission it is calculated that he administered the pledge to almost 600,000 persons); and here, even more than in Ireland, his heart was wrung by the misery

of the poor. Never before had he dealt with people whose misery, however overwhelming, could not occasionally be lifted from their minds by the hopes of an eternity of happiness, to which, in Ireland, both Protestants and Catholics looked forward. But here in the slums of London, Father Mathew had to deal with multitudes of men and women, entirely without faith, to whom this life, with its manifold troubles, was the beginning and the end.

If, as Dr. Barter conjectures, Father Mathew's paralysis was occasioned by the vigour and vitality which went out of him, and into those for whom he laboured, this particular mission must have drained him heavily, for nowhere did he more ungrudgingly give his time, strength, voice, and heart to the cause than in London. And when his day's work was done, Father Mathew had to submit to a good deal of lionising, for his fame as a moral reformer had penetrated into London drawing-rooms, and fashionable ladies contended for the possession of this Franciscan friar at their re-unions. His winning manners and complete self-possession in scenes for which he had no affinity, secured his popularity wherever he presented himself ; and, though he was pre-occupied with the memories of the painful scenes of his daily labours, and badly in need of rest, he went through his social duties bravely, for he would not miss the opportunity of serving the cause by winning influential friends.

Mr. Maguire tells how at one dinner party he created a great deal of amusement by his attempts to make a convert of Lord Brougham, who resisted good humouredly. "I drink very little wine," said Lord Brougham ; "only half a glass at luncheon, and two half glasses at dinner ; and though my medical advisers tell me I should increase the quantity, I refused to do so." "They are wrong, my lord, for advising you to increase the quantity, and you are wrong in taking the small quantity you do ; but I have my hopes of you." And so, after a pleasant resistance on the part of the learned lord, Father Mathew invested him with the medal and ribbon, the insignia and collar of the new Order of the Bath. "Then I will keep it," said Lord Brougham, "and take it to the House, where I shall be sure to meet old Lord — the worse of liquor, and I will put it on him." The announcement of this intention was received with much laughter, for the noble lord referred to was notorious for intemperance. Lord Brougham was as good as his word ; for, on meeting the veteran peer, who

was so celebrated for his potations, he said : " Lord ——, I have a present from Father Mathew for you," and passed the ribbon rapidly over his neck. " Then I tell you what it is, Brougham, I will keep sober for this night," said his lordship, who kept his vow, to the great amazement of his friends. The Marquis of Clanricarde, who was host on this occasion of Father Mathew's meeting with Lord Brougham, was a good deal surprised when, taking leave of his guests, he saw the Apostle of Temperance dart forward in the entrance hall, and eagerly shake one of the footmen by the hand. Father Mathew, who never forgot faces, recognised in this servant, a follower to whom he had, three years before, given the pledge in Ireland, and was delighted to congratulate him on the fidelity to his vow, which was guaranteed by the position in which he found him.

The welcome accorded to him by the English Press was as gracious as that which he met in the houses of the great. The *Times*, *Morning Chronicle*, and *Globe* recorded his doings as if he were a travelling royalty. This is how the latter spoke of the success of his English mission :—

" The secret of his success consists chiefly in the fact that he had wholly abstained from doing what his opponents had accused him of. He has avoided making his labours subservient either to religious or political objects, and it is by this singleness of purpose—this determination to make temperance his chief and only object—that he has been able to achieve so much in the cause he has undertaken."

But Father Mathew's London experiences included some mischances intermixed with great success. Sometimes the local publicans and their clients interrupted his meetings, and on one occasion, at Bermondsey, a band of roughs, crowned with hop wreaths and brandishing quart pots in their hands, rushed to the platform, and had to be driven away by the police and the temperance men. Such unseemly interruptions were, however, more than compensated for by various triumphs over and above the success of his ordinary day's work, which gladdened his heart. One day, for instance, when administering the pledge to a large crowd, chiefly made up of Irish labourers, he perceived, kneeling among them, Lord Arundel, the future Duke of Norfolk, whose value in attracting others to the cause was immeasurable. Another time he had the pleasure of being welcomed to Norwich, by the bishop,

Dr. Stanley, in a most cordial address, beginning in this strain : " And now, reverend sir, my friend and brother from another island, I meet you here not as a Roman Catholic priest ; I differ from your creed—I will candidly tell you I am even hostile to it ; but I meet you as a Christian brother on neutral ground," and after many compliments on the noble work he had achieved, the bishop concluded by appealing to his townsmen : " Men of Norwich, citizens of this ancient city : I appeal to you, and I trust that my appeal shall not be in vain—receive this wanderer on a sacred mission from a distant country—receive him, and give him a Christian welcome, for he has come on a Christian mission."

But as an evidence of the extraordinary influence he exercised over all kinds of people with whom he came into contact, the following extract of a letter from the somewhat scoffing Mrs. Carlyle to her philosopher husband is even more valuable than the fact of an English Catholic earl being moved to kneel for the pledge in a group of Irish labourers, or an Anglican bishop welcoming an Irish friar to work among his flock.

" He made me sit down on the only chair for a moment, then he took me by the hand, as if I had been a little girl, and led me to the front of the scaffold to see him administer the pledge. From a hundred to two hundred took it, and all the tragedies and theatrical representations I ever saw melted into one, could not have given me such emotion as that scene did. There were faces both of men and women that will haunt me while I live, faces exhibiting such concentrated wretchedness, making, you would have said, its last deadly struggle with the powers of darkness. . . . And in the face of Father Mathew, when one looked from them to him, the mercy of Heaven seemed to be laid bare. ' I dare not be absent for an hour,' he said. ' I think always if some dreadful drunkard were to come in my absence he might never muster determination to come again in all his life, and there would be a man lost.' I was turning sick, and needed to get out of the thing, but in the act of leaving him—never to see him again through all time, most probably feeling him to be the very best man of modern times (you excepted)—I had another moment of youthful enthusiasm which you will hold up your hands and eyes at. Did I take the pledge then ? No ; but I would have though, if I had not feared it would be put in the newspapers. No, not that ; but I drew him aside, having considered if I had any ring on, any

handkerchief, anything that I could leave with him in remembrance of me ; and having bethought myself of a pretty memorandum book in my reticule, put it into his hand, and bade him keep it for my sake, and I asked him to give me one of his medals to keep for his ! And all this in tears and in the utmost agitation. Had you any idea that your wife was such a fool ? I am sure I had not. The Father got through the thing admirably. He seemed to understand what it all meant quite well, inarticulate though I was. He would not give me a common medal, but took a little silver one from the neck of a young man who had just taken the pledge for example's sake, telling him he would get another presently, and laid the medal in my hand with a solemn blessing. I could not speak from excitement all the way home. When I went to bed I could not sleep, the pale faces I had seen haunted me, and Father Mathew's smile."

All this time Father Mathew was working so unceasingly at home and abroad his mind was harassed with many cares, and at a festive meeting in Cork, held sometime after his return from England, he, who was usually so sanguine and serene, saddened his sympathetic audience by saying, " Although your excellent chairman has wished me the enjoyment of many happy days, I must say I enjoy very few moments of happiness. My heart is eaten up by care and solicitude of every kind." The huge organisation, for the successful working of which he alone was responsible, could not be carried on without immense expenditure, and, although he met with generous sympathy and pecuniary aid, the burden of rapidly increasing debt bore down his spirits, rendering his nights sleepless and impairing his health. To add to this ever present trouble, he had to many times contradict the calumny that he was enriching himself and his family by the sale of temperance medals. This charge, so especially galling to a man who, in spite of the great affection he bore his own people, had been the cause of destroying the breweries and distilleries from which several of them made their incomes, wounded Father Mathew to the quick, and must count for at least as much in diminishing his vitality and force, as the exhaustion which Dr. Barter affirmed he suffered from the mesmeric healing which went out from him towards the sick and suffering.

The medals which he distributed to those who took the pledge, who were almost always too poor to pay for them, were a considerable item of expense, and one day while he was

administering the pledge in Dublin he was arrested for the balance of an account due to a medal manufacturer. The immediate effect of this arrest was to raise to its highest pitch public enthusiasm for the Apostle of Temperance, and to set his friends thinking how he could be relieved from his embarrassments. Lord John Russell, addressing a meeting at Exeter Hall, said : " To make a great impression upon the whole nation, to bring them at once from a habit in which they were too apt to indulge to the practice of these virtues by which their domestic happiness may be increased, and their moral and religious conduct improved, must have called for no ordinary diligence. . . . But we all know the extraordinary eloquence, the untiring energy, the disinterested forgetfulness of all selfish objects which did enable Mr. Mathew to accomplish his moral miracle, and by his exertions to effect a change in Ireland which was surprising to the whole civilised world. Though Mr. Mathew was endowed with this zeal and energy, and though he felt it a great reward to be able to effect such a change in the conduct of his countrymen, unhappily he did not accompany his course with that prudence which a person whose heart and soul were less engaged in the cause might have been able to follow, hence his difficulties. . . . Let us embrace this opportunity of being sharers in the glory of Father Mathew, by contributing in this country and in the sister country, to promote the cause of temperance ; and let us have the satisfaction of thinking that we have done something that will be grateful in the eyes both of God and man."

Punch, who, amidst all the fun of its pages, had from time to time serious criticism on men and events, thus commented on the arrest :—

" Now, Mathew, the martyr, brought his fortune into the market to buy up vice ; to bribe wretchedness into comfort ; to purchase with ready money crime and passion, that he might destroy them. He has laid out all his means that he might make temperance alluring to an impulsive whiskey-loving people ; he counts his tens of thousands of proselytes, and then, taking his purse, he counts nothing. He has triumphed, but he is a beggar. Taught by his temperance lessons, the peasant and the artificer—aye, thousands of them—have made their homes more worthy of human creatures, and the teacher himself is shown the way to a jail. Mathew is arrested for the price of the medals with which he decorated his army of converts—we know few orders, home or foreign, more honour-

able if sincerely worn—and unless Ireland arise as one man, the reward of the great preacher is the county prison.”

Some of the letters which Father Mathew received at this juncture must have consoled him in his trouble, they were so full of good feeling and sympathy. Here are extracts from two, by way of example, the first from a fellow-priest and fellow-worker in the city of Cork, the second from a poor soldier, hot and outraged at the idea of his benefactor being thrown into prison:—

“I always considered it cruel and unjust, that you, dear sir, should have been burdened with the enormous expense necessarily attendant on an undertaking of such vast extent and magnitude, for its machinery should have been worked out from the beginning by benevolent funds, not by your individual resources. I long anticipated that you could not continue to sustain such an immense unequal pressure, and I therefore regard our present interference in your affairs as an honest repayment of a debt you incurred on the part of the public, obviously for the beneficial interest of all, and also, I may say, as the recognised agent of every man that loves his country, and feels a concern for the moral and social improvement of the people.”

“Wee, sir, would be liken unto the wicked people of Pharo, who was all swallowed up in the Red Sea. Wee should be all drowned in the gulph of intemperance, only you was chosen to be a Moses on our behalf, and worthily did you do your duty boath for God and man, and it would be ill my part not to come forward at the present time, when you are in dangers and in the hands of the enemy; but you shall not be suffered to be cast into prison like a common felon; no, you shall not be in the same den with thieves and robbers—Dear sir,—I am most happy to be one to put my mite into the box, and I beg you will axcept this small token of my regard towards one who has done me good—to harm they self, no dear Father, I will never suffer such a stain on my name. . . . I shall ever remember you as long as theirs life in my body, May I beg of your reverence to enclose me your blessing, before I go out to India.

Father Mathew's embarrassments were set at rest for a time by the results of a public subscription, but from this time the amazing success which had attended the cause from its inauguration, began to flag. Father Mathew, unwilling to run the risk of renewed debt, felt constrained to curtail grants to

bands, temperance halls, and other means of attracting the people to ways of sobriety, and before very long the terrible famine of '46 laid Ireland waste, and his energies were drawn away from his immediate mission, and absorbed in helping the people in the awful struggle with starvation and fever, in which thousands, nay, even millions, were worsted.

These dark and terrible days when "the hunger" was rampant over the land and famished human creatures perished for food all over Ireland, are heart-rending even to read about, and shall not be touched upon here except in relation to how they affected Father Mathew's mission. With his unbounded love and sympathy for the people, it can readily be imagined how with even more than his wonted energy he gave himself up to the task of alleviating the awful misery around him. He was foremost in every organisation for helping his stricken fellow-countrymen, and by his foresight, public-mindedness, and power of working harmoniously for the common good with men of different politics and creeds, was able, not, alas ! to arrest the famine, but to save thousands from the terrible fate which menaced them. And now began the high tide of emigration which has ever since flowed from Ireland to America. Queenstown was the usual point of departure, and to see these heart-broken emigrants off, administer to them the pledge, comfort them with such cheerful words as his heart prompted even in those cheerless days, became a recognized duty of Father Mathew, whom trouble and toil had now turned into a broken old man, grey-haired and feeble, though, counting by years, he was still in the prime of life.

Father Mathew's name being so well known at home and abroad caused him to be chosen as agent for dispensing the charity of many Americans and others who sent food to alleviate the horrors of the famine, and it is said that he more than any man in Ireland overcame the prejudice of the starving people against the "yellow male," which appeared so unpalatable to them. Even in the midst of the desolation of the famine Father Mathew's loving heart found consolation in contemplating the wonderful generosity of those starving poor, ever ready, as long as anything lasted, to share their scantiest allowance of food with each other.

In 1847, Father Mathew, in consideration of his great public services, was granted a pension of £300 a year out of the Queen's Civil List, which money went the same road as all other which found its way into his hands, for he was but

the almoner of the Government, as he had been all his life of whatever funds he had in his keeping. And now, in 1848, he paid the inevitable penalty of the overwork and anxiety of the long years he had given to the temperance cause, for he was struck down with paralysis. Although he made a rally from this serious attack, and lived for eight years afterwards, he was never again the vigorous, sanguine man of the early days of the cause. The blight of the Famine was on that great work, and on all that had been hopeful and happy in Ireland, and the Apostle of Temperance had the heavy grief of seeing his ranks thinned by death and desertion.

In 1849, while still suffering from the stroke of paralysis of the year before, he determined (very much against the advice of his friends) to pay his long promised visit to America. His reception here was most cordial and enthusiastic; but though he strove manfully to repay the cordiality of his new friends with his wonted geniality, the effort of seeing and talking to countless numbers of people was no longer easy to him, and the contrast of the joy and prosperity of the New World, with the gloom and misery of the dear old land, where he had recently witnessed such heart-rending scenes of misery, saddened him. His greatest pleasure was in seeing among the well-to-do citizens of the cities he visited, men and women, to whom he had administered the pledge, in Ireland, years before, and whose faithful observance of it had secured them good positions in the New World. To many of them he was able to bring tidings of their kindred, for he never forgot a face he had known. In spite of his shattered health he toiled in America, as he had toiled at home, and with the like happy results. The United States Senate gave him a place within the Bar, a privilege which had before only been conferred on Lafayette, and the President entertained him at a banquet to meet a number of the foremost men, all eager to know the Apostle. His stay in America lasted two years and a half, for he visited twenty-five States of the Union, and administered the pledge to half a million of people. For a short time of repose he dwelt in the solitude of the forests of Arkansas, where he said Mass in the open air under the canopy of Heaven, with a congregation of only four persons.

On his return to Ireland Father Mathew, now grown too invalided to be allowed to continue his mission, was induced to take up his residence with his brother Charles at Lehenagh House, near Cork. There, surrounded by the loving care and

ministrations of his family, who did all that was possible to comfort his last sad years, he awaited the coming of Death like a man whose life's work was done, and who pined for rest. But though he could no longer seek out the drunkard, the sick, and the suffering, they still knew where to find him, and to the very end those who sought him were not sent away unsatisfied. Nay, even after the final stroke of paralysis had stilled the voice which had pleaded so lovingly and so long, his dying hand was guided to bless and sign with the cross the very last of the millions to whom he had given the pledge.

He died on the 8th of December, 1856, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, and the forty-second of his ministry, and it is surely not too much to say of him that he was mourned by an entire people. Clad in his Franciscan habit, and with the beauty and peace of earlier days come back to his dead face, this lowly Friar and great Apostle lay in state in his own church in Cork, where those among whom he had laboured so long could take a last farewell of their beloved father and friend. Many and fervent were the prayers that went up in those days of desolation, that God would be good to him who had been good to them, for whatever else their shortcomings, ingratitude to those who love and serve them is not characteristic of the race for whom Father Mathew spent himself. The name and fame of the apostolic Theobald Mathew, so justly dear to his own generation, still sends a thrill to Irish hearts, and is revered and cherished by thousands of his countrymen and women who never heard his persuasive voice, nor felt the clasp of his helpful and beneficent hand.

Some of the PENNY PUBLICATIONS
OF THE
Catholic Truth Society of Ireland.

BIOGRAPHICAL SERIES.

- Father Mathew : His Life and Work.** By Susan Gavan Duffy.
- Charles Bianconi.** By Very Rev. F. Canon Ryan, P.P.
- O'Connell.** By Very Rev. J. Curry, P.P., V.F.
- St. Columb-kille : His Life and Labours.** By Rev. P. Coffey, B.D.
- Edmund Ignatius Rice, Founder of the Christian Brothers** (with Illustrations). By a Christian Brother.
- A Christian Educator—Br. Burke and his Work** (with Illustrations). By the same.
- St. Senan and Scattery** (with Illustrations). By Judge Carton, M.R.I.A.
- Venerable Oliver Plunkett, Martyred Bishop of Armagh.** With Historical Introduction. By Michael T. Duggan.
- Lessons from the Life of an Irish Priest of the Old School.** By Rev. P. M. Lynch, P.P.
- Grania Uaile** (with Illustrations). By Most Rev. Dr. Healy, Archbishop of Tuam.
- Heber MacMahon in the Confederate Wars (1641-1650)** (with Illustrations). By Rev. J. E. McKenna, P.P.
- SS. MacArten and Dympna, Patrons of Clogher** (with Illustrations). By the same.
- Finn MacCoole : His Life and Times.** By M. J. O'Mullane, M.A.
- Rory O'Moore** (with Portrait). By the same.
- Cuchulain of Muirtheimhne** (with Illustrations). By Rev. A. M. Skelly, O.P.
- Life of Patrick Sarsfield, Earl of Lucan** (with Portrait). By William Moran.
- Ellen Mary Downing ("Mary of the Nation").** By Thomas Markham.
- Canon Sheehan : A Sketch** (with Portrait). By Rev. Michael J. Phelan, S.J.
- Geoffrey Keating : Priest, Poet, and Patriot. His Life, Times, and Literary Work.** By R. J. C.
- Brendan—Saint and Navigator.** By J. B. O'Riordan.

Some of the LARGER PUBLICATIONS
OF THE
Catholic Truth Society of Ireland.

"THE IONA SERIES."

Price 1/- each, net. By Post, 1/2.

- I. **The Coming of the King.** A Jacobite Romance. By Arthur Synan.
- II. **Hiawatha's Blackrobe.** By E. Leahy.
- III. **Peggy the Millionaire.** By Mary Costello.
- IV. **Earl or Chieftain.** The Romance of Hugh O'Neill. By Patricia Dillon.
- V. **Isle of Columbcille.** A Pilgrimage and a Sketch. By Shane Leslie.
- VI. **The Golden Lad.** A Story of Child Life. By Molly Malone.
- VII. **A Life's Ambition.** Ven. Philippine Duchesne. By M. T. Kelly.
- VIII. **The Making of Jim O'Neill.** A Story of Seminary Life. By M. J. F.
- IX. **Nicholas Cardinal Wiseman.** By Joseph E. Canavan, S.J.
- X. **The Sorrow of Lycadoon.** By Mrs. Thomas Concannon, M.A.
- XI. **The Emperor Marcus Aurelius.** A Study in Ideals. By John C. Joy, S.J.
- XII. **A Group of Nation Builders : O'Donovan—O'Curry—Petrie.** By Rev. Patrick M. M'Sweeney, M.A.

These books are suited for Community, Sodality, and Parish Libraries, for school premiums, and for ordinary Catholic readers. With a few exceptions, they aim at illustrating Irish history or Irish life. Each volume contains an artistic frontispiece, and is tastefully bound in gilt cloth.

SIXPENNY SERIES.

Price 6d. each, net. By Post, 7d.

- St. Catherine of Genoa on Purgatory.** **Paul of Tarsus.** By M. T. Kelly.
John the Beloved. By M. T. Kelly. **The Hidden Treasure.**
-

Complete Catalogue Post Free on Application.